

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 06, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write to express our support for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Transportation Grant application submitted by Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) for the California State Route 46 Widening Segment 4B (*BUILD 46*) project. The *BUILD 46* project is in the design phase and will soon be ready for construction by an experienced partnership with a record of delivering highway projects on time and on budget.

This project will widen State Route 46 from two lanes to four lanes along a 5.3 mile segment traveling through rural Lost Hills, California. This rural corridor has been dubbed "blood-alley" due to numerous head-on collisions experienced by local and regional travelers accessing the California central coast from San Joaquin Valley communities. The County has requested \$17.5 million in federal assistance, along with HPP TEA-21 funding that comprises 71.1% of the total *BUILD 46* project funding. The remaining \$10.1 million is funded through the 2020 California STIP funding cycle.

State Route 46 is a significant interregional route that facilitates the movement of goods and people. Nationally, this stretch of State Route 46 serves as an east-west final connection to the California coast for the State Route 58 corridor by way of Interstate 5. On average, trucks comprise 26% of the total traffic on this route and 65% of all of these trucks are 5-axle trucks. The U.S. Department of Defense, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, has identified State Route 46 East as a Strategic Highway Corridor Network (STRAHNET) route. STRAHNET is a network of linked highways deemed essential to national defense for facilitating the movement of troops and equipment to airports, ports, rail lines and military bases. When completed, this project will improve safety to the traveling public and will improve the movement of freight to local, regional and national destinations.

This project also has additional benefits for the regional community. The planned *BUILD 46* project improvements will improve North-South connectivity for the community of Lost Hills and for regional commuters to the oil fields and agricultural operations along the corridor, improving safety and ensuring economic vitality in Central California.

We strongly support this project and request that you provide BUILD Discretionary Transportation Grant funding to complete the final 5.3 miles of this project to widen State Route

46 between Interstate 5 in northwestern Kern County and California's beautiful Central Coast, reducing traffic fatalities and improving safety along this rural corridor. Selection of *BUILD 46* supports the BUILD Grant Program goals to spend 30% of funding in rural areas across the United States. We respectfully request your thorough consideration of Kern COG's application. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Kevin McCarthy
House Majority Leader



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress